Conference on Disarmament

21 February 2018

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Note verbale dated 23 August 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, in its capacity as the Coordinator for the Group of 21, to the Secretariat of the Conference of Disarmament transmitting the G-21 Working paper on Work of the Conference on Disarmament

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its complements to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and in its capacity as the Coordinator for the Group of 21, has the honour to submit herewith the G-21 Working paper on the Work of the Conference on Disarmament.

On behalf of the Group of 21, the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka requests that the document be issued as an official Working paper of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2017.

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.

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Work of the Conference on Disarmament

1. The Group of 21 would like to stress, once again, that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the First Special Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD 1) and emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. The need to redouble our efforts must be underscored in order to reinforce and revitalize the CD and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work including, inter alia, the negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The G-21 reaffirms its working papers submitted to the Conference in 2016, on nuclear disarmament, on the Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, on Negative Security Assurances, on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and on Work of the Conference of Disarmament.

2. Nuclear Disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The G-21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the CD, without further delay. As the highest priority, the CD should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and veritable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time. In this context, the Group recalls its working paper contained in CD/2063 that calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, in particular on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

3. The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28-29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamation as "Zones of Peace" in other regions of the world. The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the Fourth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the Fifth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC achieve a total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin American and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace and highlights its character of first ever Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Group welcomes the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico, in the framework of the 25th Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

4. The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms its related resolution A/RES/71/71 to follow up to this meeting. As Former Secretary General of the UN rightly mentioned in the CD in 2015 "The High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament demonstrated that

this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels". In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution in particular its call for urgent decision by the CD to commence negotiation on nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a UN high level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard. The Group welcomes with appreciation the establishment of September 26 as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and the high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly organized every year to commemorate and promote this International Day, highlighting the events around the world in commemoration of this day, and calls on governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day.

5. The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-Ended Working Group mandated by the UN General Assembly " to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons" and hopes that it would contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the CD, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. To this end, the Group takes note of UNGA Resolution A/RES/71/258 "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations" which calls on all member states to participate in the 2017 United Nations conference, to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

6. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear weapon States (NWS) and long-standing request by NNWS to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that NNWS implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear weapon States contrary to their obligations under the UN Charter. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances in accordance with UNGA resolution A/RES/71/75.

7. The Group concurs with the former UN Secretary General by delivering the statement 23 May 2015 that there is a growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the hosting of Conference on this subject, convened in Oslo on 4-5 March 2013, in Mexico on 13-14 February and in Vienna on 8-9 December 2014.

8. In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate, and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. The Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament, through an inclusive process involving all States.

9. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. The Group calls on all nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all states parties are committed to under Article VI. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear weapons

detonation, the Group will endeavour to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Group notes the relevant resolutions adopted by the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly.

10. The G-21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of various efforts to reach consensus on the CD's Programme of Work and all subsequent decisions, efforts and proposals towards this end.

11. The Group reiterates the urgency for the CD to execute its mandate as set out by SSOD1 and also adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus. The Group encourages the President of the Conference to spare no efforts and to continue wide consultations with all delegations to the CD to achieve this goal.

12. The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the UN Disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercising political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

13. While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the UN disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for an early convening of the Fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-IV) and expresses its deep concern over the fact that SSOD IV is yet to be convened. The Group welcomes the decision 71/551 of 23 December 2015 by which General Assembly decided that the Open-Ended Working Group on Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament should submit a report on its work, including possible substantive recommendations, before the end of the Seventy-Second Session of General Assembly.

14. The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and deeply regrets the delay of concrete action to that end.

15. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT express their disappointment and deep concern that three State Parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositary and co-sponsors States of the 1995 NPT review and Extension Conference Resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference (NPT RevCon) including the process to establish a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction , as contained in the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 Resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 Resolution, and in accordance with Para 6 of this Resolution , "Call upon all States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction" and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 Resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of Israel's accession to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. While the lack of agreement on an outcome document

could undermine the NPT regime, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT emphasize the continued validity of the commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, particularly the unequivocal undertaking towards nuclear disarmament, and calls for their full implementation without further delay.

16. The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the CD.

17. The Group also recognizes the importance of enhancing engagement between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, according to decisions taken by the Conference and continues to support the strengthening of the CD's interaction with civil society. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the CD — Civil Society Forum on 19 March 2015 and the Second Informal Civil Society Forum on 22 June 2016.